

Journal of Sustainable Tourism >

Volume 23, 2015 - [Issue 3](#)

11,437 170

Views

CrossRef citations to date

22

Altmetric

Articles

# Can ecotourism deliver real economic, social, and environmental benefits? A study of the Osa Peninsula, Costa Rica

Carter A. Hunt , William H. Durham, Laura Driscoll & Martha Honey

Pages 339-357 | Received 08 Apr 2013, Accepted 04 Sep 2014, Published online: 21 Oct 2014

 Cite this article  <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2014.965176>



Sample our  
Environment and Sustainability  
Journals  
>> [Sign in here](#) to start your access  
to the latest two volumes for 14 days

 Full Article

 Figures & data

 References

 Citations

 Metrics

 Reprints & Permissions

Read this article

Share

## Abstract

Doubt persists about ecotourism's ability to make tangible contributions to conservation and deliver benefits for host communities. This work in Costa Rica's Osa Peninsula tests the hypothesis that ecotourism in this region is more effective at improving well-being for local residents, at enhancing their access to key resources and information, and at supporting biodiversity conservation than other locally available economic sectors. Data from 128 semi-structured interviews with local workers, both in ecotourism and in other occupations, together with associated research, indicate that ecotourism offers the best currently available employment opportunities, double the earnings of other livelihoods, and other linked benefits. Locally, ecotourism is viewed as the activity contributing most to improvements in residents' quality of life in the Osa Peninsula and to increased levels of financial and attitudinal support for parks and



All authors share an interest in the use of tourism to stimulate biodiversity conservation and alleviate poverty in Latin America.

---

## Additional information

### Notes on contributors

Carter A. Hunt

Carter A. Hunt is an assistant professor of recreation, park and tourism management at the Pennsylvania State University. At the time of this research, he was a postdoctoral scholar in the Department of Anthropology at Stanford University.

William H. Durham

William H. Durham is the Bing Professor in Human Biology, a Yang and Yamazaki University Fellow, and has been a member of the Stanford Anthropology faculty since 1977. He is also the co-director of the Center for Responsible Travel (CREST).

Laura Driscoll

Laura Driscoll, MA, was the CREST Stanford Coordinator at the time of the research and is currently pursuing doctoral studies in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management at the University of California, Berkeley.

## Martha Honey

Martha Honey, PhD, is the co-founder and co-director of the Center for Responsible Travel (CREST), and was an executive director of The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) from 2003 to 2006.

---

### Related research

People also read

Recommended articles

Cited by  
170

## Information for

[Authors](#)

[R&D professionals](#)

[Editors](#)

[Librarians](#)

[Societies](#)

## Opportunities

[Reprints and e-prints](#)

[Advertising solutions](#)

[Accelerated publication](#)

[Corporate access solutions](#)

## Open access

[Overview](#)

[Open journals](#)

[Open Select](#)

[Dove Medical Press](#)

[F1000Research](#)

## Help and information

[Help and contact](#)

[Newsroom](#)

[All journals](#)

[Books](#)

## Keep up to date

Register to receive personalised research and resources by email



Sign me up



Copyright © 2026 Informa UK Limited [Privacy policy](#)

[Cookies](#) [Terms & conditions](#) [Accessibility](#)

Registered in England & Wales No. 01072954  
5 Howick Place | London | SW1P 1WG



**Taylor & Francis**  
by informa